

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 STR-05 CEA-01

/092 W

-----097623 240842Z /11

R 231940Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2107

INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

ALL EC CAPITALS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION USNATO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, FR

SUBJECT: BARRE - CHIRAC -- THE GENTLEMEN DISAGREE

REF: PARIS 33674

SUMMARY. DURING A LENGTHY TELEVISION APPEARANCE, JACQUES CHIRAC CRITICIZED PRIME MINISTER BARRE'S ECONOMIC POLICIES AND WARNED AGAINST ANY ATTEMPT BY BARRE TO IMPOSE HIS PROGRAM ON MAJORITY CANDIDATES. CHIRAC EMPHASIZED THE PLURALIST NATURE OF THE MAJORITY AND  
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DEFENDED THE RIGHT OF INDIVIDUAL PARTIES TO DISAGREE WITH THE GOVERNMENT ON PARTICULAR POLICIES. AT THE SAME TIME HE PREDICABLY MAINTAINED HIS LOYALTY TO THE MAJORITY FOR THE COMING ELECTION AND AS A BASIS OF GOVERNMENT THEREAFTER. THREE DAYS LATER, PRIME MINISTER BARRE DEFENDED HIS ECONOMIC POLICIES VIGOROUSLY, BUT DOWNPLAYED ANY POLITICAL DIFFERENCES WITH THE RPR.

END SUMMARY.

1. CHIRAC ALLEGED THAT FRANCE'S SICK ECONOMY WAS NOT IMPROVING AND THAT THE MEDICINE HAD TO BE CHANGED. HE CALLED FOR FREE PRICING COMBINED WITH IMPROVEMENT IN INTERNAL MARKETING STRUCTURES AND SAID THAT THESE WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN CONTROLS IN HOLDING DOWN PRICE INCREASES. HE ALSO CALLED FOR AN ATTACK ON UNEMPLOYMENT, BASED ON MEASURES TO INCREASE INVESTMENT. CONCERNING BARRE'S EFFORTS TO DEFINE OBJECTIVES FOR ACTION FOR THE POST-ELECTION GOVERNMENT, CHIRAC NOTED THAT THE TERM OF THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WAS ENDING. IF BARRE'S EFFORT, HE CONTINUED, REPRESENTED A TESTAMENT OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND GENERAL CONCEPTS, THEN IT POSED NO PROBLEM. HOWEVER, IF IT REPRESENTED AN EFFORT TO DETERMINE FUTURE GOVERNMENT POLICY IN ADVANCE OF THE ELECTIONS OR TO POSE CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING "GOOD OR BAD" MAJORITY CANDIDATES FOR BARRE'S ELECTORAL SUPPORT OR SUBSEQUENT PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT, THEN IT WAS DANGEROUS AND OPPOSED TO THE RPR'S VIEWS.

2. BARRE KEPT HIS RESPONSE LOW KEY, STATING THAT HIS ECONOMIC POLICY WAS A REALISTIC ANSWER TO FRANCE'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AND WAS DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT A SITUATION ALLOWING FOR MORE POSITIVE ACTION. NOTING CHIRAC'S COMMENT THAT A "TESTAMENT" OF THE BARRE GOVERNMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MENT WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE, BARRE STATED SARCASTICALLY THAT HE WAS STILL ALIVE AND THAT HIS PROPOSALS WOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE FRENCH PEOPLE AS A BASIS FOR THEIR CHOICE IN MARCH.

3. COMMENT: THE INTRA MAJORITY BY-PLAY BETWEEN BARRE AND CHIRAC WILL NO DOUBT CONTINUE AS BARRE ATTEMPTS TO MAINTAIN THE AUTHORITY OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND POLICIES IN THE FACE OF POLITICAL AMBITIONS OF THE SEPARATE MAJORITY PARTIES. RPR CANDIDATES, FOR THEIR PART, WILL FACE TOUGH COMPETITION FROM OTHER CANDIDATES ATTEMPTING TO IDENTIFY CLOSELY WITH BARRE AND GISCARD. GENUINE DIFFERENCES OVER ECONOMIC POLICY AND GISCARD'S DESIRE FOR AN OPENING TO THE LEFT WILL NO DOUBT ACCENTUATE THIS COMPETITION. BUT FOR THE TIME BEING THE DEBATE BETWEEN CHIRAC AND BARRE IS BEING KEPT WITHIN BOUNDS AND HAS NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO EXPAND TO A FULL-BLOWN CONFRONTATION BETWEEN CHIRAC AND GISCARD. THE RADIO - TV EXCHANGES HAVE CAPTURED TEMPORARILY THE ATTENTION OF THE FRENCH WHO WERE LULLED INTO BELIEVING ALL INTERNAL PROBLEMS RESIDE IN THE LEFT. THEY HAVE ADDED A REALISTIC NOTE TO THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE MAJORITY AND

MAY EVEN SERVE AS A WARNING THAT THE MAJORITY DOES NOT  
HAVE A STRONG ENOUGH POSITION TO ENJOY THE LUXURY OF  
SERIOUS DISAGREEMENTS BEFORE NEXT MARCH.  
HARTMAN

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
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**Review Markings:**  
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